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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ADDIS ABABA 002131

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/05/2018  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [SO](#) [ET](#)  
SUBJECT: SOMALI TFG OFFICIAL SAYS YUSUF CANNOT BACK DOWN

REF: A. ADDIS ABABA 2122  
[1](#)B. NAIROBI 1885

Classified By: CDA Deborah Malac. Reason 1.4 (B).

[1](#)1. (C/NF) SUMMARY. Somalia Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Deputy Head of Mission in Addis Ababa Jibril M. Osman (Hawiye/Murosade) told PolOffs on August 4 that TFG President Yusuf could not back down against the Ethiopian ultimatum that Yusuf must support TFG Prime Minister Nur Adde's attempted firing of Mohammed Dheere or the Ethiopians would withdraw from Somalia. Jibril accused TFG Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Abdisalam of being the real problem within the TFG. He also said that Prime Minister Nur Adde should be replaced with former Prime Minister Ghedi because Ghedi could be trusted to continue the fight against the extremists, despite being corrupt. END SUMMARY.

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"PRESIDENT YUSUF CANNOT BACK DOWN"  
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[1](#)2. (C/NF) Jibril insisted in no uncertain terms, and while visibly angry, that Ethiopia's ultimatum to President Yusuf (REF A) that Ethiopia would withdraw from Somalia if Yusuf did not support the Prime Minister's firing of Dheere was unacceptable, and he stressed that "Yusuf cannot back down." Jibril predicted that if Yusuf did back down, Yusuf would be permanently weakened in the eyes of the Somali people. Jibril repeated throughout the conversation that "the short man" (Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles) cannot tell us what to do. Jibril said the accompanying verbal assault by Colonel Gebre, the Ethiopian military advisor to the TFG, showed disrespect to Yusuf and the TFG as a whole. Jibril predicted that if Gebre, who was recalled to Addis Ababa this week for consultations, returned to Mogadishu he would be killed in retaliation by someone looking to uphold Somali honor. Jibril said that the issue was no longer about whether Dheere stayed or left, but about whether the TFG would be dictated to by Ethiopia. He claimed that Yusuf would sacrifice the TFG before kneeling to Ethiopian demands. Jibril thought that if the Ethiopians replaced Colonel Gebre, the door would be open to reconciliation between Yusuf and Addis Ababa. When queried whether he took the Ethiopian threat to withdraw as real, Jibril responded that Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum was serious, but that, "only when Ethiopian intelligence tells us they are leaving, we will know its true."

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"DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER THE REAL PROBLEM"  
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13. (C/NF) Jibril accused TFG Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Abdisalam of being the real problem within the TFG because Ahmed was trying to dismantle the TFG from within to facilitate the ascension of the Habir Gedir/Ayr to power. Jibril said Nur Adde was "just there" and not active or forceful; rather it was Ahmed who was behind the move against Dheere. Jibril said that Dheere was cognizant of this and predicted that Dheere had no choice but to have the Deputy Prime Minister killed in retaliation.

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"BRING BACK GHEDI"  
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14. (C/NF) Jibril claimed that Nur Adde was too soft on the extremists, and that the parliament should replace Nur Adde with former Prime Minister Ghedi. He said Ghedi was committed to fighting the extremists and his track record on that issue was unquestionable. He acknowledged that Ghedi was a "crook," but said that the parliament would need to ensure that there were checks put in place to ensure Ghedi did not mismanage funds as he did in the past. Jibril said that Nur Adde's statement on July 15 that he would resign his position for peace was interpreted by many Somalis to mean that Nur Adde would give his seat to Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) leader Sheikh Sharif, and in effect, give the TFG over to the enemy.

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COMMENT  
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15. (C/NF) While Jibril is clearly biased in favor of Yusuf, we believe his perspective is illustrative of the growing divide between the Yusuf and Nur Adde camps, and we have heard similar views from other Yusuf supporters in recent months. It is apparent that the Ethiopians, in their frustration with the failure of the TFG to perform, have offended Somali pride and nationalism, and we do not expect that this rift between Yusuf and the Ethiopian government will be easily mended, if at all. Post will continue to engage with the Ethiopian government at all levels to press them to continue to support the TFG and provide space for the Djibouti Agreement to work. END COMMENT.  
MALAC